

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-06 OMB-01 /050 W

-----011128 089014 /22

R 010822Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7209

INFO DEA HEADQUARTERS

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0825

DEA HQ PLS PASS CASEY/EN AND DOYLE/ENOF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, SN

SUBJECT: NEW GOS STRATEGY TO ATTACK GROWING DRUG PROBLEM

SUMMARY: THE GOS INTENDS TO LAUNCH ON APRIL 1 A MASSIVE ASSAULT ON SINGAPORE'S GROWING HEROIN PROBLEM. THE NEW STRATEGY IS DESIGNED TO ATTACK SIMULTANEOUSLY BOTH THE DEMAND AND SUPPLY SIDES OF THE DRUG PROBLEM. THE KEY FEATURE OF THE STRATEGY IS OPERATION FERRET WHICH WILL EMPLOY POLICE, SPECIAL CONSTABULARY, CUSTOMS, THE SAF AND THE VIGILANTE CORPS TO ROUND UP, DETAIN (POSSIBLY FOR AS LONG AS A YEAR), AND DETOXYIFY ALL SUSPECTED DRUG ADDICTS AND ABUSERS. THIS WILL FREE THE CENTRAL NARCOTICS BUREAU (CNB) (CURRENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR REHABILITATION AS WELL AS ENFORCEMENT) TO CONCENTRATE ITS TIME AND RESOURCES ON PREVENTING TRAFFICKING. END SUMMARY.

1. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT AS TO WHAT FURTHER STEPS THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO TAKE AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKERS, THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS CHUA SIAN CHIN STATED ON FEBRUARY 24 THAT THE IMPOSITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY WOULD NOT HAVE ITS GREATEST IMPACT ON TRAFFICKERS UNTIL THOSE SENTENCED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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DEATH WERE ACTUALLY HANGED. CHUA SAID NINE TRAFFICKERS HAD BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH AND 30 OTHERS FACED THE DEATH SENTENCE IF CONVICTED IN THE HIGH COURT. HOWEVER, THE EXECUTION OF THOSE SENTENCED HAD BEEN DELAYED WHILE THEIR CASES WERE BEING APPEALED. IN THE MEANTIME THERE WAS STILL A "STRONG DEMAND" FOR DRUGS.

2. TO MEET THIS PROBLEM, CHUA ANNOUNCED A TWO PRONGED STRATEGY DESIGNED TO HIT HARD AT BOTH THE DEMAND AND SUPPLY SIDES OF THE DRUG PROBLEM. HE SAID THE POLICE, VIGILANTE CORPS AND SPECIAL CONSTABULARY WOULD UNDERTAKE THE LESS SPECIALIZED, LABOR-INTENSIVE WORK OF ROUNDING UP DRUG ABUSERS AND ADDICTS, AND THE CNB WOULD THEN HAVE MORE TIME AND RESOURCES TO CONCENTRATE ON TRAFFICKERS. HE INDICATED THE PROGRAM WOULD BEGIN AS SOON AS OLD QUARTERS HAD BEEN CONVERTED INTO A DRUG REHABILITATION CENTER. HE NOTED THAT THESE MEASURES WERE "ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO PREVENT THEM (DRUG ABUSERS) FROM INFECTING OTHERS AND SPREADING FURTHER THE DRUG EPIDEMIC."

3. ON FEBRUARY 22, A SENIOR CNB OFFICIAL COMMENTED TO A DEA OFFICIAL THAT THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS WAS NOT AT ALL PLEASED WITH THE RISE OF HEROIN ADDICTION IN SINGAPORE. CONSEQUENTLY, THE MINISTRY HAD DECIDED TO GET TOUGH AND HAD DEVELOPED OPERATION FERRET DESIGNED TO WIPE OUT HEROIN IN A MASSIVE ISLAND-WIDE PURGE. THE MISSION OF OPERATION FERRET IS TO APPREHEND AND DETOXYIFY ALL ADDICTS, TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE FROM INTERROGATING THOSE ROUNDED UP, AND TO USE THIS INTELLIGENCE TO SEIZE HEROIN AND ARREST AND TRY TRAFFICKERS. THE OPERATION WILL BEGIN ON APRIL 1 AND INCLUDE CNB, THE POLICE FORCE, VIGILANTE CORPS (VC), CUSTOMS AND THE SAF.

4. ACCORDING TO THE CNB OFFICIAL THE POLICE AND VC WILL BLITZ THE ISLAND ROUNDING UP ALL ADDICTS AND ABUSERS. THREE COMPOUNDS ARE BEING PREPARED TO HOLD A MINIMUM OF 2,000 ADDICTS FOR A FULL YEAR OF DETENTION IF NECESSARY. EACH ADDICT WOULD BE DE-CONFIDENTIAL

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TOXIFIED BY THE "COLD TURKEY" METHOD FOR A THREE MONTH PERIOD. SAF UNITS WILL COMMAND AND GUARD THE COMPOUNDS. ALL ADDICTS WILL BE INTERROGATED BY CNB OFFICERS AND POLICE DETECTIVES FOR INFORMATION REGARDING TRAFFICKING NETWORKS, ETC. CNB WILL THEN PREPARE CRIMINAL CASES OR DETAINMENT PAPERS ON MAJOR VIOLATORS. SMUGGLING INTELLIGENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO CUSTOMS FOR INTERDICTION OPERATION. CNB HAD ASKED THE MINISTRY HOW LONG THE OPERATION WOULD LAST AND WAS TOLD IT WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL THE JOB WAS DONE AND THAT IT WAS FUNDED FOR ONE YEAR.

5. DURING DISCUSSION WITH DCM FEBRUARY 25, ATTORNEY GENERAL TAN BOON TEIK APPEARED TO BE TOTALLY UNAWARE OF OPERATION FERRET AND SAID THE PRESS LIKED TO EXAGGERATE THESE MATTERS. WHEN IT WAS MENTIONED THAT MINISTER CHUA HAD ANNOUNCED IT IN PARLIAMENT ON THE DAY BEFORE TAN SEEMED SURPRISED AND SLIGHTLY UPSET AND SAID THE PAPERS HAD PROBABLY NOT REACHED HIS DESK. ATTORNEY GENERAL TAN'S COMMENTS HAD BEEN PROMPTED BY DCM'S QUESTION WHETHER ADDICTS WOULD BE DETAINED UNDER INTERNAL SECURITY ACT OR WOULD NEW LEGISLATION BE REQUIRED. IN HIS STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT

CHUA HAD INDICATED THAT AMENDMENTS TO THE MISUSE OF DRUG ACT WOULD BE INTRODUCED TO GIVE GREATER POWERS TO ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND TO REMOVE "OBSTRUCTIONS" IN DEALING WITH DRUG ABUSERS AND ADDICTS.

6. COMMENT: GIVEN CHUA'S STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT IT WAS SURPRISING THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL APPEARED UNAWARE EITHER OF OPERATION FERRET OR PLANS TO AMEND THE MISUSE OF DRUGS ACT.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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TAGS: SNAR, SN
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